

I. Preliminary Matter

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner approve the drawings filed October 6, 2000.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 4 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mutoh et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,673,951).

Claim 4

Claim 4 recites a “method for multi-bit processing of a *gray scale image* in a printer.” Although Mutoh discloses that one out of four color components is black, Mutoh discloses a *color image*. Mutoh does not disclose a *gray scale image* which would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claim 4 further recites “multi-bit dithering *each pixel* of input image *expressed as a gray component*.” Mutoh discloses tone reproduction by the combination of dot pattern modulation and several stepwise varying dot diameters or by the combination of multi-level dither and variations of dot diameter. See col. 4, lines 37-43. However, there is no indication that each pixel of an input image expressed as a gray component is multi-bit dithered.

Claim 4 further recites “causing said multi-bit dithered image to be printed in a dot of a respectively different size *according to a gray component value* of each pixel.” Mutoh discloses that the number of ink droplets forming one record dot and the diameter of dots is variable by the

modulation of the pulse width. See col. 4, lines 35-38. There is no teaching or suggestion in Mutoh that a multi-bit dithered image is printed in a dot of a respectively different size *according to a gray component value of each pixel*.

For at least the above reasons, claim 4 and its dependent claims should be deemed allowable.

Claim 8

Claim 8 recites “modulating said multi-bit dithered image to a respectively different pulse width *according to the gray component value of its pixel*.” As previously submitted, there is no teaching or suggestion that a multi-bit dithered image is modulated to a respectively different pulse width *according to the gray component value of its pixel*. Merely because Mutoh discloses the use of pulse width modulation to generate dots corresponding to a given image signal, does not mean that an image is modulated to a respectively different pulse width according to a gray component value of its pixel. For at least the above reasons, claim 8 should be deemed allowable.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-3 and 9 have been allowed.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 5-7 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. At the present time, Applicant has not rewritten claims 5-7 in independent form since Applicant believes they will be deemed allowable, without amendment, by virtue of their dependency to claim 4 for the reasons set forth above.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
Appln. No.: 09/679,517

Attorney Docket No.: Q60624

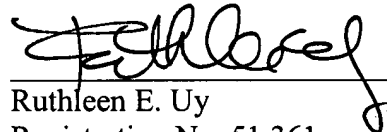
Further, Applicant submits that the claims should be governed by their recitations and not by the Examiner's reasons for allowance.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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